

O P I N I O N



Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

The last time I checked, Sisters has no rail line, nor an airport that can handle large quantities of freight. That means that all goods that we receive here in Sisters like groceries, medicines, fuel, hardware, lumber, etc. arrives by truck. Mostly large, long-bed trucks.

Each time I drive west out of town I notice there is usually a large truck parked along Highway 20 while I'm guessing the truck driver makes his/her way, walking along the busy road, back to town for a meal or other supplies. Lately I've noticed quite a few trucks parked between McDonalds and the newest hotel, on Rail Way, which impinges on the traffic flow on that little side street. My guess would be that once that hotel opens for business it won't be an option of truckers to stop there. During the bad-weather events, when the pass is closed for avalanche removal or

due to an unfortunate accident, or if the trucks have mechanical problems there just isn't anywhere for them to stop.

Sisters is growing. New businesses will be needing more supplies, thus more truck traffic.

It might be a thing for us to start planning now, to have a location just off the highway, away from residential areas where the trucks may park for awhile when the drivers need to rest, get food or repairs. There will be many things to consider. Will the area need to be regulated? How long is too long to stay? Where exactly is there room to park big trucks? I'm NOT suggesting an actual truck stop, but we might just need to start planning for the inevitable.

Kara Mickaelson



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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Mostly Cloudy 66/43	Partly Cloudy 74/47	PM Showers 61/34	Partly Cloudy 57/35	Partly Cloudy 61/38	Mostly Cloudy 62/41

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SPRD turns corner on "Operation Shipshape"

By Jeff Tryens

SPRD Board President

Earlier this year, the mother of one of Sisters Park & Recreation's after-school kids said to me, "The other day, my daughter, out of the blue, announced that she did not want to die. Before I could formulate a reassuring answer, she added, 'because I wouldn't be able to go to SPRD anymore.'" Wow. Now that's an endorsement!

What this child did not know was her little bit of heaven on Earth was becoming more than a little frayed around the edges. She didn't notice the sagging rain gutters or the pile of construction debris behind the building her classroom is in, or the exposed electrical wires that were part of the irrigation system. She was also unaware that employee turn-over was quite high or the Wi-Fi system was not secure.

Over the years, the SPRD board had tried to do more and more to meet community needs with no significant influx of additional funds. That changed a year ago, when voters chose to give SPRD approximately one million additional tax dollars spread over five years to make needed infrastructure improvements and to make necessary changes to retain staff. The SPRD board also committed to make after-school and youth programs more financially accessible; to expand programming for residents across the board; and to provide more support for community events.

Board and staff have been hard at work implementing what we're calling "Operation Shipshape" to complete the first phase of SPRD's expansion — getting our house in order. Under the leadership of Interim Executive Director Courtney Snead, we have instituted over 30 physical and administrative improvements ranging from fixing those

sagging gutters to installing a new firewall to protect confidential customer information. A list of completed improvements can be found on SPRD's website, www.sistersrecreation.com. We have also taken significant steps to make programs more affordable including cutting the after-school fee in half.

As Operation Shipshape is wrapping up, board members and staff are turning their attention to broadening both offerings and access to SPRD programming. Because of the levy, SPRD can now offer programs and services without having to be certain that they will pay for themselves. We can staff-up to offer daycare for kids during school holidays. We can do the necessary legwork to launch a new co-ed softball league. We can work with a group of motivated seniors to develop a plan to broaden opportunities to play pickleball in Sisters. We're doing the first-ever 'Senior Fitness Games' in June. We are working with a coalition in town to offer more programming for residents who have trouble getting around. Each time, we're able to use newly hired staff to make these things happen.

Over 20 years ago, SPRD's predecessor, SOAR (Sisters Organization for Activities and Recreation), was founded on the belief that having a safe place for kids to go after school was a critically important need in town. While we now do many more things for a much broader swath of Sisters-area residents, SPRD has remained a bedrock of support for several generations of parents in Sisters. With the resources provided by the local option, I firmly believe that the mother who told me the story about her daughter could be telling my successor, years from now, a similar story about her grandchild's love of SPRD.

Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the The Nugget Newspaper.